

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
2101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

16 January 1962

Dear Joshua,

As you know, my present term of office as President of the Academy will expire this June. Accordingly, it will be necessary for the members to elect my successor at the time of the annual meeting in April. Because of my deep and continuing devotion to the Academy, I will gladly serve in an unofficial capacity whenever called upon, and will certainly assist with the completion of the building and the Centennial Anniversary. But I have told the Council that under no circumstances will I accept renomination should I be asked. The demands of the Academy continue to grow, my obligations to The Rockefeller Institute are steadily increasing, and I am firmly convinced that there needs to be rotation in this office; only under strong pressure was I persuaded to accept renomination four years ago.

I write of this because the Council and I are seeking advice from members of the Academy as to how they think the duties of President should be fulfilled. Such advice as we receive will be helpful to the Nominating Committee which I am appointing.

In selecting a nominee or nominees, the Committee will have to take into consideration the fact that the extent of the Academy's opportunities and responsibilities has greatly increased in recent times. The nature of the Presidency has undergone marked change since my first election nearly twelve years ago.

During those years we have endeavored to make the Academy a strong and vigorous institution for the furtherance of science, for the assistance of all arms of Government, and for the cultivation of our relations with foreign scientists and international organizations. Furthermore, the many traditional duties of an academy president such as participation in academic ceremonies, international congresses, and dedication of laboratories have increased as the stature of the Academy has grown. By adding to the duties of the President of the Academy those of Chairman of its Research Council, we have integrated all related activities of the Academy.

Throughout this period of rapid evolution of the Academy, there has been a steady growth of Federal involvement in science and technology. Because of this, we have been enabled to increase our activities in the support of science and we have been called upon for advice more than ever before. We are to an increasing degree involved in broad policy issues at the higher levels of Government.

The widening scope of the Academy's functions is evident in our many Committees of broad significance, such as those dealing with Oceanography, Atmospheric Science, Polar Research, the Mohole, Space Science, Materials Research, Natural Resources; in our extensive program of publications; in the almost daily conferences held in our house for the discussion of scientific problems; in the wide range of our international activities, etc. The staff has increased many fold; the budget has risen from \$4,000,000 in 1949 to more than \$15,000,000. It is my belief, concurred in by the Council, that these many activities, which have involved thousands of scientists and engineers on a part time basis, have greatly strengthened our nation.

We now face the issue: should we limit our activities to those of a traditional academy of earlier times, or should we continue to increase our assistance to the Federal Government as it depends more and more on science and technology? And should we continue to expand our efforts to further science and to aid scientists in universities, in industry, and in Government?

If we continue along the latter course, I believe the Academy will need a full time President or Executive Vice President. Certainly during recent years I have found that the Academy has required of me more than normal full time; the Trustees of The Rockefeller Institute and my family have generously made this possible. And then there was the selfless, devoted assistance of many friends such as you.

If the decision is to elect a President who can and will give all his time to the position, the Academy may face the necessity of providing an adequate salary. The status and nature of the Presidency would thereby be somewhat altered.

Because of your deep interest in the affairs of the Academy, I would be interested in any reactions or suggestions you may care to offer; I will gladly transmit them to the Committee on Nominations.

With warm personal regards, I am

Yours sincerely,



Detlev W. Bronk